

# Know, Sow, Grow newsletter

UF/IFAS Extension Flagler County

The University of Florida is an Equal Opportunity Institution



## A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW UF/IFAS COUNTY EXTENSION DIRECTOR!

By Laura Valencia, UF/IFAS Flagler County Extension Director

I am thrilled to introduce myself as the new Flagler County Extension Director and Family and Consumer Science Agent. My journey with the Cooperative Extension family began 20 years ago, and over the years, I've had the privilege of serving in various roles, including as a volunteer, 4-H Program Assistant, Family Nutrition Program Assistant, and 4-H Youth Development Agent.

My love for plants is deeply rooted in the fond memories of my grandmother's garden in urban Puerto Rico, where I grew up. Her backyard was a lush haven filled with "aguacates" (avocado), "gandules" (pigeon peas), "calabaza" (pumpkin), "toronjas" (grapefruit), "limones" (lemon), "parcha" (passion fruit), and "papayas," along with a full herb garden. There was nothing quite like stepping outside to pick a few leaves for a fresh cup of tea or grabbing ingredients from the garden to be part of our meal that day. This early connection to nature and gardening has shaped my passion for the work I do today—to teach, serve others, and see positive behavior changes in our community.

One of the driving forces behind my career is my deep belief in the mission of Extension. The Extension system empowers individuals and communities by providing the knowledge and resources they need to thrive. It's not just about education—it's about making a tangible difference in people's lives. Whether it's helping a family improve their financial stability or guiding someone towards a healthier lifestyle, the work we do in Extension has a lasting impact.

In Flagler County, I see tremendous opportunities to make a difference, particularly in the areas of health, wellness, and financial management. Health and wellness are more than just buzzwords—they are the foundation of a strong community. I am passionate about equipping our residents with the tools and knowledge they need to live healthier lives, from making informed nutritional choices to adopting sustainable wellness practices.

*Laura E. Valencia continued on page 2*

## What's Inside

[Laura E. Valencia](#)

[Upcoming Activities](#)

[Workshops](#)

[What the Heck](#)

[Fall Garden](#)

[Florida Frogs](#)

[Growing Vanilla](#)

[Aster Yellows](#)

[Your Master Gardener Volunteers](#)



**UF/IFAS Extension Flagler County  
Master Gardener Volunteers**

[150 Sawgrass Rd  
Bunnell, FL 32110](#)

Phone  
386-437-7464

Email  
[mgardener@flaglercounty.gov](mailto:mgardener@flaglercounty.gov)

### Our Mission

To assist Extension Agents in providing research-based horticultural education to Florida residents.

### Our Vision

To be the most trusted resource for horticultural education in Florida.

*Laura E. Valencia continued from page 1*

Financial management is another critical area where I believe we can create meaningful change. Financial literacy is key to personal empowerment and community resilience. By offering programs that teach budgeting, saving, and smart financial planning, we can help individuals and families in Flagler County achieve greater financial security and independence.

I am deeply committed to serving this community and look forward to working together to build a healthier, more financially secure Flagler County. I wholeheartedly believe in the mission and vision of Extension, which has guided me throughout my career and brought me here to serve in this capacity. Together, we can make a lasting impact and create positive change.

Thank you for your support as we embark on this new chapter!



#### PHOTOS:

Header: UF/IFAS Extension Flagler County Office

Right: Laura E. Valencia

## MASTER GARDENER UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

### Palm Coast Library

We'll be in the lobby typically the 4th Saturday of each month from 9:30 - 11:30 am  
Sept 28, Oct 26, Nov 23, Dec 28

### Washington Oaks Gardens State Park

6400 N Ocean Shore Blvd. in Palm Coast  
10:00 am - 1:00 pm  
Sept 14, Oct 12, Nov 9, Dec 14

### Palm Coast Community Center

Please see the article below for more information about the fall classes.

Sept 24,	6:30 pm	Successful Gardening: Cool Season Crops
Sept 27,	10 am	Least Toxic Pest Control in the Garden
Oct 22,	6:30 pm	Successful Gardening: FL Friendly Edible Landscape
Oct 25,	10 am	Successful Gardening: FL Friendly Edible Landscape
Nov 19,	6:30 pm	Soil Blocking
Nov 22,	10 am	Soil Blocking
Dec 10,	6:30 pm	FL Gardening for New Residents
Dec 13,	10 am	Frost Prep & Recovery + Hurricane Prep & Recovery

## PALM COAST COMMUNITY CENTER CLASS INFORMATION

By Sharon Smith, MGV

There are 8 classes still remaining taught by Master Gardeners at the Palm Coast Community Center this fall. To register, visit <https://tinyurl.com/7hhkmcen>. Classes cost \$10, and you will bring home plants that are related to the topic. Fall classes run August through December. Tuesday classes are at 6:30 pm, Friday classes are at 10:00 am, and they run one hour long.

Christine Paris is our vegetable gardening guru. She is teaching three classes this fall. The **September 24** class is on growing cool season vegetables. The **October 22 and 25** classes are on successful vegetable gardening using Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Principles.

On **September 27**, Mary Ellen Setting, who has expertise in entomology, is teaching about using the least toxic pest control in the landscape.

**November 19 and 22**, Wendy Norcut is demonstrating how to start plants in soil blocks instead of plastic pots in a hands-on class.

**December 10**, Barbara Kipnis will teach her very popular class on Florida Gardening for new residents.

**December 13**, Denise Cochran will teach about preparing plants to survive a frost and care of the plants after a frost.

The UF/IFAS Extension Flagler County is excited about this fall line-up of classes, and we hope to see you there. The format is informal, and questions about the material are welcomed. Our goal is to be the most reliable source of information for your horticultural needs.

## HORTICULTURE AGENT UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

UF/IFAS Extension Flagler County Horticulture Agent, Judy Jean, will be teaching a series of workshops this fall. Please visit the link for each class to learn more, including the location and price.

Sept 6	9 - 11:30 am	Gardening with Muscadine Grapes	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/ypssdtd9">https://tinyurl.com/ypssdtd9</a>
Sept 11	10 am - 12:30 pm	Gardening with Strawberries	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/2dmkznyc">https://tinyurl.com/2dmkznyc</a>
Sept 21	10 am - 11:30 am	Vibrant Lawns, Vibrant Colors	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/mpvxj8kc">https://tinyurl.com/mpvxj8kc</a>
Oct 9	1 - 3:00 pm	Gardening with Stone Fruit	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/5hyv4k9z">https://tinyurl.com/5hyv4k9z</a>
Oct 15	1 - 3:00 pm	Gardening with Blueberries	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/y8rwbzn5">https://tinyurl.com/y8rwbzn5</a>
Oct 19	10 - 11:30 am	Choosing and Caring for Flowering Trees	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/3f74x26j">https://tinyurl.com/3f74x26j</a>
Nov 2	10 - 11:30 am	Choosing and Caring for Landscape Trees	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/23hd64s7">https://tinyurl.com/23hd64s7</a>

## WHAT THE HECK IS THAT IN MY GARDEN?

By Mary Ellen Setting, MGv

Have you ever found something strange looking in your garden and wondered, “What the heck is THAT?” Sometimes you do not even know what manner of plant or animal this new find is, so identifying is difficult. Deciding what, if anything, to do about it is even harder. To give you some guidance, we are presenting a series of oddities you might encounter to help solve the mystery. In case you missed it, you can find the first of this series in our Summer Newsletter found at this link <https://tinyurl.com/589es6v>

### Tiny, perfect jug-like clay pot on a wall of the house, window sills, or screen about the size of a marble

The “pot” is a mud nest built by the potter wasp, *Eumenes fraternus*. To build the nest, the female potter wasp collects water then mixes it with soil. Mud pellets are carried in the wasp’s mandibles (mouth parts) with the help of its forelegs. It takes one to two hours to build the entire nest. She then inserts her abdomen into the nest and lays eggs that are suspended from slender threads from the top or side of the pot. Next, she gathers from one to 12 caterpillars that she injected with venom to paralyze and preserve as the food supply for her young, and places them in the pot. The pot is then plugged. The new adult wasp emerges from the brood cell by chewing a hole through the thin side of the pot.

Potter wasps do not usually sting and are not aggressive, so just leave them alone and watch them create their masterpieces. You can scrape the nest off when empty.



### Leaves have become discolored with a black, velvety coating all over them

This is called sooty mold, a fungus that grows on leaves that have honeydew on them. Honeydew is a clear liquid excreted (as a waste product) by sucking insects like scales and aphids. Honeydew on leaves creates an ideal environment for the fungus, sooty mold, to grow. While it is unattractive, sooty mold does not damage plants. The best way to get rid of sooty mold is to manage insect pests with a blast of hose water, neem oil or insecticidal soap.

### RESOURCES

Potter wasps: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/IN726>  
Sooty mold: <https://tinyurl.com/3e7hj7xz>

### PHOTOS:

Potter wasp: UF/IFAS  
Sooty mold: UF/IFAS



## PLANTING A FALL GARDEN

By Doreen Westcott, MGV

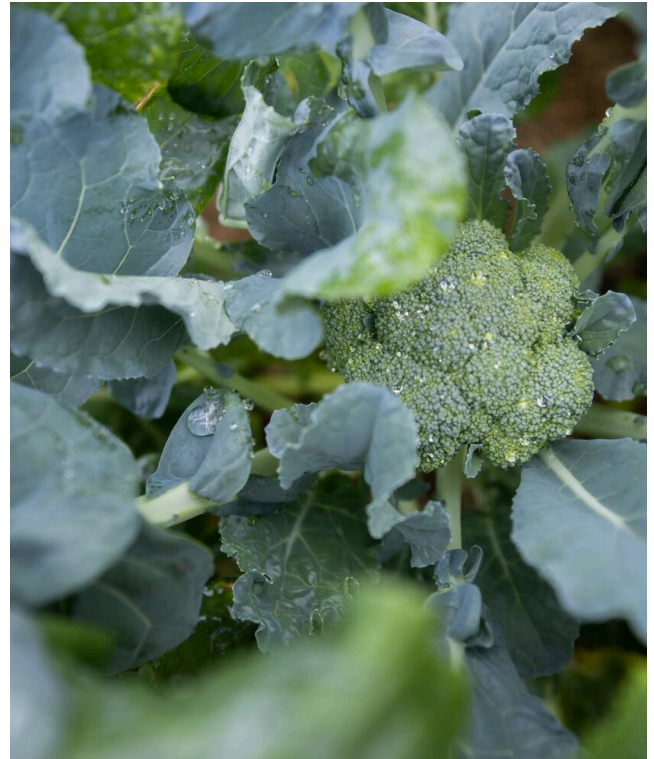
Whether you are adding to an existing vegetable or flower garden or starting a garden for the first time, there are plenty of plants to plant in the fall. We can begin in the month of September.

### Central Florida Gardening Calendar: Vegetables

**September:** Beets, cabbage, broccoli, eggplant, peppers, lettuce, tomatoes, strawberry, brussels sprouts, collards, endive, kale, sugarcane, Swiss chard, tropical spinach and cauliflower are easy to transplant from your local garden center. Celery, mustard, pineapple, and spinach are carefully transplanted. Plant beans (bush, lima and pole), carrots, cucumbers, onions, radish, squashes and turnips as seeds. Strawberries and tomatoes are great to grow in containers.

**October:** Same as September vegetables minus tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, beans, cucumbers, turnip, squashes, and onions which cannot be planted in October. Add kohlrabi, which is easy to transplant.

**November:** Same as the information in October minus strawberry and tropical spinaches which cannot be planted in November.



### Central Florida Gardening Calendar: Flowers

**September:** Plant annuals, bedding plants, and bulbs. Refresh your garden with fall colors. Add ageratum, celosia, marigolds and zinnia. Add herbs: mint, rosemary, basil, and Mexican tarragon. Divide and replant perennials, bulbs, and plants that plants grew too large. Add elephant ear bulbs.

**October:** Plant annuals, dianthus, blue salvia, and wax begonia. Add agapanthus, rain lily, and other varieties of lily bulbs to bloom in spring and summer. Plant herbs: parsley, cilantro, chives, garlic, dill, fennel, rosemary, and sage.

**November:** Plant annuals: pansy, viola, snapdragon, dianthus, cape daisy, and alyssum. Bulbs to include: amaryllis, crinum, hurricane lily, and daylily. You can still plant October's herbs except for garlic and chives. Add thyme. You can still divide and replant bulbs if this was not completed in September.

Always scout your garden for insect damage. The Central Florida Gardening Calendar has additional information for vegetable and flower gardens. Watch for the next in the series in our Winter Newsletter.

#### PHOTOS

TOP RIGHT: broccoli, UF/IFAS

LOWER LEFT: *Salvia urica*, Scott Zona UF/IFAS

#### RESOURCE

Central Florida Gardening Calendar:

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/EP450>

## FLORIDA'S NATIVE FROGS

By Mary Ellen Setting, MGV

As gardeners, it is common for us to see frogs in the landscape. Frogs provide benefits to humans and the environment. They control garden pests like insects and slugs. Frogs also serve as a food source for many larger wildlife species. Most frogs are reclusive and harmless to people. However, two species of frogs that have invaded Florida can be harmful to humans and pets.



Frogs have a unique body design with long, powerful rear legs for jumping, a short backbone, and a large head with a wide mouth. All of Florida's native frogs lay their eggs in water. Tadpoles hatch from the eggs and experience major transformation as they change into adults.

Florida is home to 27 species of native frogs. Some frogs are commonly called toads; toads are a specific kind of frog with drier, wartier skin than other frogs. Florida's frogs vary in appearance and preferred habitat. Scientists group them by where they spend the majority of their time.

Terrestrial species live under plants, logs, or other hiding places; many burrow in loose soil. Terrestrial frogs often have dry, bumpy skin. Arboreal frog species live off the ground, in trees, bushes or even on buildings. They have somewhat enlarged, sticky toepads for climbing. Some species live and breed in large lakes and are grouped as aquatic species. They usually have well-developed toe webbing for swimming.

### PHOTOS

LEFT: Green treefrog, UF/IFAS  
TOP RIGHT: Cuban frog, Mary Ellen Setting  
BOTTOM RIGHT: Cane toad, UF/IFAS

Florida has been invaded by four species of non-native frogs: the Cuban treefrog, the cane toad, the greenhouse frog, and the newest invader, the African clawed frog. The Cuban treefrog and the cane toad impact native populations. Both eat a wide variety of native animals including small snakes and native treefrogs. Cane toads are poisonous and may be toxic to native wildlife and dogs. Both species should be humanely euthanized (with gloves on) by applying benzocaine or lidocaine to their bellies and placing them in the freezer overnight, then disposed of in trash.



### RESOURCE

Florida's Frogs:

<https://ufwildlife.ifas.ufl.edu/frogs/florida.shtml>



## GROWING VANILLA IN A CONTAINER

By Kathi Wright, MGV

Vanilla extract is the second most valuable spice after saffron and is the world's most popular flavor. The species *Vanilla planifolia* is naturalized in South Florida and is the major commercial species.

*V. planifolia* is a fleshy, perennial vine that can get quite tall. It is semi-epiphytic: it can root in the ground and grow on other plants without direct soil contact. It flowers once a year typically between February and April in South Florida. The flowers are large and fragrant. Pollen from one *V. planifolia* flower can be used to fertilize the same flower or other flowers on the vine in order to get bean development.

If you are up to the challenge, you can try growing vanilla in a container of light soil with organic material. Ideally, you will buy a potted plant that is 24-36" long so it will flower in 2-3 years. Use a stable support to hold the vine as it grows.

Vanilla prefers temperatures above 60 degrees and can be killed by freezing temperatures, so you'll want to move it inside during our winter months. Vanilla likes bright, indirect light. Do not over water to avoid root diseases.

Once the plants flower, they can be hand pollinated with a toothpick. Beans take about 9 months to mature.

With patience, you can enjoy the beautiful aroma and delicious flavor of your own vanilla extract.



### PHOTOS

*Vanilla planifolia* flower, UF/IFAS  
*V. planifolia* beans, UF/IFAS

### RESOURCES

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/HS1348>  
<https://tinyurl.com/yc5axjdv>

## ASTER YELLOWS

By Sharon Smith, MGV



### PHOTO

Aster yellows on sunflower, National Sunflower Association

### RESOURCES

<https://extension.umn.edu/plant-diseases/aster-yellows>  
<https://www.sunflowernsa.com/growers/Diseases/Aster-Yellows>

Aster yellows is a plant infection caused by a small bacterium phytoplasma that is carried by the aster leafhopper. This insect is 1/8" and wedge-shaped. It is tan to olive brown with three pairs of spots on the head. A plant becomes infected when the insects chew on it. As the aster yellows bacteria moves through the plant's vascular system (phloem), the entire plant is infected.

Symptoms of aster yellows are distorted flowers with deformed green petals, The shoots, leaves, or flowers emerge from the same point. The plants are yellow and stunted. Lastly, the plant will wilt and die. There is no cure. The only option is to remove the plant, bag it, and put it in the garbage.

Aster yellows can infect over 300 species of plants. It is most common in coneflowers, black eyed Susans, and zinnias. When the aster leafhopper feeds on an infected plant, it will ingest the bacteria and spread it to other plants. In order to control aster yellows, weed control is needed to prevent the spread from plant to plant.

## YOUR MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEERS

### Malcolm Fraser

A big shout out to Malcolm Fraser, who we are thrilled to name as our **Master Gardener Volunteer of the Season!** Mal has been a Master Gardener for more than 20 years and has volunteered more hours than any other Flagler County Master Gardener.

He has worked so hard in our demonstration gardens and even managed the green house for several years. The photo to the left shows him working on the raised garden beds with Christine Paris.

Thank you, Mal! You are amazing!



### Flagler Radio Podcast

UF/IFAS Extension Flagler County Horticulture Agent, Judy Jean has her own podcast. You can listen to it here:

<https://flaglerbroadcasting.com/podcasts/lets-talk-some-dirt>

Her first episode was on vegetable gardening, the second on lawn and pests, and the most recent on volunteering.

### Buy a Memorial Brick for the Demonstration Gardens

You now have the opportunity to purchase a brick that will be placed in our Demonstration Gardens. You can choose the Memorial Garden or Herb Garden for your custom-made brick.

You choose what is written on the brick as well as the icon you would like to include. Please consider recognizing your company or a loved one. Email us for more information at [mgardener@flaglercounty.gov](mailto:mgardener@flaglercounty.gov).

### Follow us on Facebook!

Stay up to date with Master Gardener events and read educational information to help you have success with your landscape and garden.

Follow UF/IFAS Flagler County Master Gardeners on Facebook! <https://tinyurl.com/2p8srfaw>

If you have any plant-related questions or need gardening advice, do not hesitate to reach out to us. Flagler County Master Gardener Volunteers are a great resource for home gardeners and can provide valuable info and guidance on topics such as soil health, pest management, plant selection, and more. We are trained volunteers who have a passion for gardening and can provide advice on a wide range of topics. If you need help, stop by or reach out to your local Master Gardeners (email: [mgardener@flaglercounty.gov](mailto:mgardener@flaglercounty.gov)).

### Helpful Links

Flagler County Extension: <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/flagler/>

UF Solutions for Your Life: <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Florida-Friendly Landscaping: <https://ffl.ifas.ufl.edu/>

UF/IFAS Gardening Solutions: <https://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/>

UF Master Gardener: <https://tinyurl.com/nhk2z2eh>

Know, Sow, Grow Past Issues: <https://tinyurl.com/yc67dfwk>